

Remarks

The Office Action mailed May 5, 2006 has been carefully reviewed and the following remarks have been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-18 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-18 are rejected. Claims 1, 2, and 7-9 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

The rejection of Claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C §112, second paragraph, is respectfully traversed. Applicant has amended Claims 1, 7, and 9. Claims 2-6 depend from independent Claim 1, Claims 8 and 11-14 depend from independent Claim 7, and Claims 10 and 15-18 depend from independent Claim 9. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-18 particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as their invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the section 112 rejection to Claims 1-18 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1-3, 5-11, 13-15, and 17-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark (U.S. Patent No. 5,980,458) in view of Bjaerum et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,537,217) is respectfully traversed.

Clark describes a data acquisition method. In the method, a plurality of successive line acquisitions (56) are interleaved among a set of frames (62) (column 10, lines 14-19). The set of frames include a frame (62A) and a frame (62B) so that successive line acquisitions (56) are interleaved between two alternate frames (column 10, lines 14-19). However, that the set of frames will, in most typical applications, such as blood flow mapping or B-mode scanning, include a greater number of frames (column 10, lines 19-23). In the method, a frame is comprised of a plurality of lines of a plurality of packets A, B, and C (column 2, lines 19-22).

Bjaerum et al. describe a system and a method for improved resolution. The system includes a plurality of Doppler frames (702-706) and a plurality of B-mode frames (708-716) (column 7, lines 39-40). The method includes calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images from the same pulse transmissions to increase a frame rate (column 7, lines 42-43). Doppler data are acquired with constant sampling intervals, and can be processed using a sliding window technique (column 7, lines 44-46). For example, a plurality of pulse transmissions (718, 720,

and 722) are utilized to compute the Doppler data in one beam direction for a Doppler frame (702) (column 7, lines 46-48).

Claim 1 recites an ultrasonic pulse transmission method comprising “when P ultrasonic pulse transmissions are conducted in one direction to acquire a first acoustic line signal that belongs to a first frame, interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second frame different from the first frame.”

Neither Clark nor Bjaerum et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest an ultrasonic pulse transmission method as recited in Claim 1.

Specifically, neither Clark nor Bjaerum et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest when P ultrasonic pulse transmissions are conducted in one direction to acquire a first acoustic line signal that belongs to a first frame, interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second frame different from the first frame. Rather, Clark describes interleaving a plurality of successive line acquisitions among a set of frames, interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames, and that the set of frames will include a greater number of frames. Clark also describes that a frame is comprised of a plurality of lines of a plurality of packets A, B, and C. A description of interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames does not teach interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal. Bjaerum et al. describe calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images from the same pulse transmissions to increase a frame rate. Bjaerum et al. further describe utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data in one beam direction for a Doppler frame. A description of calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images and utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data does not teach the first and second acoustic line signals. Accordingly, neither Clark nor Bjaerum et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction

to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second frame different from the first frame. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al.

Claims 2, 3, 5, and 6 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2, 3, 5, and 6 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicant submits that Claims 2, 3, 5, and 6 likewise are patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al.

Claim 7 recites an ultrasonic diagnostic apparatus comprising “an ultrasonic probe; a number-of-frames defining device for defining a number of frames f ; a transmitting/receiving device for driving said ultrasonic probe to conduct P ultrasonic pulse transmissions in one direction and receive echoes to acquire a first acoustic line signal that belongs to a first one of the frames, wherein P is at least equal to two; and a transmission direction control device configured to control the transmission direction to interleave, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission to acquire a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second one of the frames different from the first one of the frames.”

Neither Clark nor Bjaerum et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest an ultrasonic diagnostic apparatus as recited in Claim 7. Specifically, neither Clark nor Bjaerum et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a transmission direction control device configured to control the transmission direction to interleave, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission to acquire a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second one of the frames different from the first one of the frames. Rather, Clark describes interleaving a plurality of successive line acquisitions among a set of frames, interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames, and that the set of frames will include a greater number of frames. Clark also describes that a frame is comprised of a plurality of lines of a plurality of packets A, B, and C. A description of interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames does not teach interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted to

acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission to acquire a second acoustic line signal. Bjaerum et al. describe calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images from the same pulse transmissions to increase a frame rate. Bjaerum et al. further describe utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data in one beam direction for a Doppler frame. A description of calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images and utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data does not teach the first and second acoustic line signals. Accordingly, neither Clark nor Bjaerum et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a transmission direction control device configured to control the transmission direction to interleave, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission to acquire a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second one of the frames different from the first one of the frames. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 7 is submitted to be patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al.

Claims 8, 11, and 13-14 depend from independent Claim 7. When the recitations of Claims 8, 11, and 13-14 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, Applicant submits that Claims 8, 11, and 13-14 likewise are patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al.

Claim 9 recites an ultrasonic diagnostic apparatus comprising “an ultrasonic probe; a number-of-frames defining device for defining a number of frames f ; a transmitting/receiving device for driving said ultrasonic probe to conduct P ultrasonic pulse transmissions in one direction and receive echoes to acquire a first acoustic line signal, wherein P is at least equal to two; a transmission direction control device for controlling the transmission direction in an intra-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to the frame to which said first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in said one direction, or in an inter-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a third acoustic line signal that belongs to a frame different from that to which said first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse

transmissions in said one direction; and an interleave mode selecting device for an operator to select between said intra-frame mode and inter-frame mode.”

Neither Clark nor Bjaerum et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest an ultrasonic diagnostic apparatus as recited in Claim 9. Specifically, neither Clark nor Bjaerum et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a transmission direction control device for controlling the transmission direction in an intra-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to the frame to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in the one direction, or in an inter-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a third acoustic line signal that belongs to a frame different from that to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in the one direction, and an interleave mode selecting device for an operator to select between the intra-frame mode and inter-frame mode. Rather, Clark describes interleaving a plurality of successive line acquisitions among a set of frames, interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames, and that the set of frames will include a greater number of frames. Clark also describes that a frame is comprised of a plurality of lines of a plurality of packets A, B, and C. A description of interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames does not teach the interleave mode and the interleave mode selecting device as recited in Claim 9. Bjaerum et al. describe calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images from the same pulse transmissions to increase a frame rate. Bjaerum et al. further describe utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data in one beam direction for a Doppler frame. A description of calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images and utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data does not teach the first, second, and third acoustic line signals. Accordingly, neither Clark nor Bjaerum et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a transmission direction control device for controlling the transmission direction in an intra-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to the frame to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions

in the one direction, or in an inter-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a third acoustic line signal that belongs to a frame different from that to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in the one direction, and an interleave mode selecting device for an operator to select between the intra-frame mode and inter-frame mode. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 9 is submitted to be patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al.

Claims 10, 15, 17, and 18 depend from independent Claim 9. When the recitations of Claims 10, 15, 17, and 18 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 9, Applicant submits that Claims 10, 15, 17, and 18 likewise are patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1-3, 5-11, 13-15, and 17-18 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 4, 12, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark is respectfully traversed.

Clark is described above.

Claim 4 depends from independent Claim 1 which is recited above. Clark does not describe or suggest an ultrasonic pulse transmission method as recited in Claim 1. Specifically, Clark does not describe or suggest when P ultrasonic pulse transmissions are conducted in one direction to acquire a first acoustic line signal that belongs to a first frame, interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second frame different from the first frame. Rather, Clark describes interleaving a plurality of successive line acquisitions among a set of frames, interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames, and that the set of frames will include a greater number of frames. Clark also describes that a frame is comprised of a plurality of lines of a plurality of packets A, B, and C. A description of interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames does not teach interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted to acquire

the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal. Accordingly, Clark does not describe or suggest interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second frame different from the first frame. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Clark.

When the recitations of Claim 4 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicant submits that Claim 4 likewise is patentable over Clark.

Claim 12 depends from independent Claim 7 which is recited above. Clark does not describe or suggest an ultrasonic diagnostic apparatus as recited in Claim 7. Specifically, Clark does not describe or suggest a transmission direction control device configured to control the transmission direction to interleave, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission to acquire a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second one of the frames different from the first one of the frames. Rather, Clark describes interleaving a plurality of successive line acquisitions among a set of frames, interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames, and that the set of frames will include a greater number of frames. Clark also describes that a frame is comprised of a plurality of lines of a plurality of packets A, B, and C. A description of interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames does not teach interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission to acquire a second acoustic line signal. Accordingly, Clark does not describe or suggest a transmission direction control device configured to control the transmission direction to interleave, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission to acquire a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second one of the frames different from the first one of the frames. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 7 is submitted to be patentable over Clark.

When the recitations of Claim 12 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, Applicant submits that Claim 12 likewise is patentable over Clark.

Claim 16 depends from independent Claim 9 which is recited above. Clark does not describe or suggest an ultrasonic diagnostic apparatus as recited in Claim 9. Specifically, Clark does not describe or suggest a transmission direction control device for controlling the transmission direction in an intra-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to the frame to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in the one direction, or in an inter-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a third acoustic line signal that belongs to a frame different from that to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in the one direction, and an interleave mode selecting device for an operator to select between the intra-frame mode and inter-frame mode. Rather, Clark describes interleaving a plurality of successive line acquisitions among a set of frames, interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames, and that the set of frames will include a greater number of frames. Clark also describes that a frame is comprised of a plurality of lines of a plurality of packets A, B, and C. A description of interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames does not teach the interleave mode and the interleave mode selecting device as recited in Claim 9. Accordingly, Clark does not describe or suggest a transmission direction control device for controlling the transmission direction in an intra-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to the frame to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in the one direction, or in an inter-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a third acoustic line signal that belongs to a frame different from that to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in the one direction, and an interleave mode selecting device for an operator to select between

the intra-frame mode and inter-frame mode. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 9 is submitted to be patentable over Clark.

When the recitations of Claim 16 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 9, Applicant submits that Claim 16 likewise is patentable over Clark.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 4, 12, and 16 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 4, 12, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al., and further in view of Okunuki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,460,179) is respectfully traversed.

Clark and Bjaerum et al. are described above. Okunuki et al. describe an array transducer. A scanning plane S1, which is an area from which two-dimensional echo data can be obtained, is produced by scanning the array transducer electronically (column 2, lines 6-8). Further, under a condition, when the array transducer is moved mechanically for mechanical scanning in the right and left directions, the electronic scanning plane S1 is also shifted (column 2, lines 9-12).

Claim 4 depends from independent Claim 1 which is recited above. None of Clark, Bjaerum et al., or Okunuki et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest an ultrasonic pulse transmission method as recited in Claim 1. Specifically, none of Clark, Bjaerum et al., or Okunuki et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest when P ultrasonic pulse transmissions are conducted in one direction to acquire a first acoustic line signal that belongs to a first frame, interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second frame different from the first frame. Rather, Clark describes interleaving a plurality of successive line acquisitions among a set of frames, interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames, and that the set of frames will include a greater number of frames. Clark also describes that a frame is comprised of a plurality of lines of a plurality of packets A, B, and C. A description of interleaving successive line

acquisitions between two alternate frames does not teach interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal. Bjaerum et al. describe calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images from the same pulse transmissions to increase a frame rate. Bjaerum et al. further describe utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data in one beam direction for a Doppler frame. A description of calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images and utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data does not teach the first and second acoustic line signals. Okunuki et al. describe shifting an electronic scanning plane S1 when an array transducer is moved mechanically for mechanical scanning in the right and left directions. Accordingly, none of Clark, Bjaerum et al., or Okunuki et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second frame different from the first frame. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al. and further in view of Okunuki et al.

When the recitations of Claim 4 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicant submits that Claim 4 likewise is patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al. and further in view of Okunuki et al.

Claim 12 depends from independent Claim 7 which is recited above. None of Clark, Bjaerum et al., or Okunuki et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest an ultrasonic diagnostic apparatus as recited in Claim 7. Specifically, none of Clark, Bjaerum et al., or Okunuki et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a transmission direction control device configured to control the transmission direction to interleave, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission to acquire a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second one of the frames different from the first one of the frames. Rather, Clark describes interleaving a plurality of successive line acquisitions among a set of frames, interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames, and

that the set of frames will include a greater number of frames. Clark also describes that a frame is comprised of a plurality of lines of a plurality of packets A, B, and C. A description of interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames does not teach interleaving, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission to acquire a second acoustic line signal. Bjaerum et al. describe calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images from the same pulse transmissions to increase a frame rate. Bjaerum et al. further describe utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data in one beam direction for a Doppler frame. A description of calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images and utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data does not teach the first and second acoustic line signals. Okunuki et al. describe shifting an electronic scanning plane S1 when an array transducer is moved mechanically for mechanical scanning in the right and left directions. Accordingly, none of Clark, Bjaerum et al., or Okunuki et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a transmission direction control device configured to control the transmission direction to interleave, between the P ultrasonic pulse transmissions conducted in the direction to acquire the first acoustic line signal, at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission to acquire a second acoustic line signal that belongs to a second one of the frames different from the first one of the frames. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 7 is submitted to be patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al. and further in view of Okunuki et al.

When the recitations of Claim 12 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, Applicant submits that Claim 12 likewise is patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al. and further in view of Okunuki et al.

Claim 16 depends from independent Claim 9 which is recited above. None of Clark, Bjaerum et al., or Okunuki et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest an ultrasonic diagnostic apparatus as recited in Claim 9. Specifically, none of Clark, Bjaerum et al., or Okunuki et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a transmission direction control device for controlling the transmission direction in an intra-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a

second acoustic line signal that belongs to the frame to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in the one direction, or in an inter-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a third acoustic line signal that belongs to a frame different from that to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in the one direction, and an interleave mode selecting device for an operator to select between the intra-frame mode and inter-frame mode. Rather, Clark describes interleaving a plurality of successive line acquisitions among a set of frames, interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames, and that the set of frames will include a greater number of frames. Clark also describes that a frame is comprised of a plurality of lines of a plurality of packets A, B, and C. A description of interleaving successive line acquisitions between two alternate frames does not teach the interleave mode and the interleave mode selecting device as recited in Claim 9. Bjaerum et al. describe calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images from the same pulse transmissions to increase a frame rate. Bjaerum et al. further describe utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data in one beam direction for a Doppler frame. A description of calculating a plurality of Doppler and B-mode images and utilizing a plurality of pulse transmissions to compute Doppler data does not teach the first, second, and third acoustic line signals. Okunuki et al. describe shifting an electronic scanning plane S1 when an array transducer is moved mechanically for mechanical scanning in the right and left directions. Accordingly, none of Clark, Bjaerum et al., or Okunuki et al., considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a transmission direction control device for controlling the transmission direction in an intra-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a second acoustic line signal that belongs to the frame to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in the one direction, or in an inter-frame mode in which the transmission direction is controlled to interleave at least one ultrasonic pulse transmission for acquiring a third acoustic line signal that belongs to a frame different from that to which the first acoustic line signal belongs between the ultrasonic pulse transmissions in the one direction, and an interleave mode selecting device for an operator to select between the intra-frame mode and

inter-frame mode. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 9 is submitted to be patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al. and further in view of Okunuki et al.

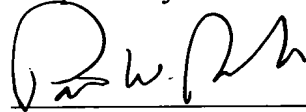
When the recitations of Claim 16 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 9, Applicant submits that Claim 16 likewise is patentable over Clark in view of Bjaerum et al. and further in view of Okunuki et al.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 4, 12, and 16 be withdrawn.

Applicant respectfully invites the Examiner to discuss any of the above mentioned issues.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



Patrick W. Rasche
Registration No. 37,916
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600
St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740
(314) 621-5070